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ABSTRACT

This booklet (one of a series of 10 booklets in a reading project to benefit Kosair Children's Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky) contains 10 stories especially written for sixth graders by educators. The stories are about: a student's coping with a terminal illness and its effect on his classmates; a boy's feelings about his rheumatoid arthritis; children's reactions to various hospital experiences; a 12-year-old's problem with overweight; a son's facing up to the truth of his parents' divorce; how children and others deal with personal differences caused by illness or disability; and similar topics. Students read the stories in the booklet and answer comprehension questions, and pledges are made by parents and friends for each question answered. The stories or story topics may be used in the classroom for instructional purposes and are intended to integrate the language arts, social studies, health, and creative arts. (SR)

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What is it?

It is an educational project designed to benefit KOSAIR Children's Hospital. Students at each grade level (K-8) read ten stories and answer comprehension questions. Pledges are made by parents and friends for each question answered.

What are these stories about?

The stories are about: diseases; accidents; accident prevention; children's reactions to hospital stays; dealing with personal differences; etc. For older children, the topics of alcohol and drug abuse are also included. Many of these stories highlight personal triumphs.

Who reads these stories?

Any child whose teacher and parent(s) support the project.

Can children receive help with reading and answering questions?

Yes. Parents are encouraged to help their child (regardless of reading ability) read and answer the questions.

How much instructional time will this take?

Very little. Teachers simply take a child's word for his participation and record the money returned. Upon completion of the program, the teacher completes a brief checklist for any prizes earned.

BENEFITS

Reading/Writing Experience

These stories are interesting and educationally sound at each grade level. The questions following each selection are based on a new questioning strategy. Children will be actively engaged in the reading/writing process.

Philanthropy

Children learn to be helping members of society as they raise money for less fortunate children.

Parental Involvement/Interaction

Children will have the opportunity to discuss with parents ideas and concerns that may never have been brought out without the questions following these stories.

Integration of Subjects

Teachers may use stories or story topics in the classroom for instructional purposes. Teachers will be provided with motivational and educational strategies to accompany these stories. These ideas help integrate the language arts, social studies, health, and creative arts. Many are based on whole language ideas, and higher level thinking skills are encouraged.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards

All children will receive an achievement certificate signifying their participation in the program. Children who collect $10 or more in pledges will receive prizes for their accomplishments. Best of all, children will gain a sense of pride as they help other children.

For more information, you may write of call: Susan Ramp Ridout, Ph.D.
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Kosair Children's Hospital's

READATHON

KIDS HELPING KIDS

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STORIES WRITTEN BY EDUCATORS FROM INDIANA AND KENTUCKY

A LETTER TO THE PARENT
ABOUT THIS BOOK AND YOUR CHILD

This booklet contains stories especially written for children of your child's age. They have all been written by educators. Many of them tell of the fears and feelings these educators had when they were children. Some of them are written through the eyes of a parent.

The stories deal with topics which are sometimes difficult for us to think or talk about. Yet, these very topics are the ones which our children most desperately need to have an adult share with them. Some of the stories may make you and your child cry or feel sad. Others will lift your spirits in memorable ways. Hopefully, one or two will cause you to say, "I had those same feelings."

It is our sincere hope you will use these stories as starters for a special time of sharing with your child.

No one knows your child better than you do. Therefore, we encourage you to preview the stories before your child reads them or you read them to your child. Some stories may be best read with your child. It is, of course, your right and responsibility to exclude any story which you may feel is beyond your child's present level of maturity.

At the end of each story are questions to be answered. At your discretion, your child may either write or discuss the answers with a responsible adult. Questions which are well suited for discussion are marked with asterisks (*). Questions answered in either form may be counted toward your child's fund raising efforts for the children of Kosair.

These booklets are in their first printing. If you have suggestions or comments which would improve their effectiveness in helping future readers, please call or write to:

Susan J. Gibbs
Director of Annual Giving and Special Events
Children's Hospital Foundation
601 S. Floyd Street
Louisville, KY 40202
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Day of Doom

Susan L. Wilson
Eastern Kentucky University

The sun peered through the curtains as Charlie's mother opened them. Charlie sat up, rubbing the sand from his eyes. "Today is the day of doom," he thought to himself as his mother bent down to kiss his cheek good morning. He wished a fifty foot blizzard would drop from the sky, but this was very unlikely since it was June.

He dragged himself out of bed to get dressed. As he tied his tennis shoes, he heard his mom tell him to hurry. They had to be at the surgery center soon. Charlie swallowed hard.

The drive seemed to take just seconds. Soon he, his mom, and his little brother, Jeremy, were standing at the hospital admissions desk. While his mom filled out some papers, Charlie and Jeremy sat down in the visitors' lobby. With a grin on his face, Jeremy told Charlie, "They'll probably miss and cut off your hand or maybe your whole arm." Charlie glared at Jeremy, then he looked down at the small knot on his wrist. Why did his mom bring Jeremy? Why did he have this knot on his wrist that had to be taken off? The doctor said it was *benign* . At first, Charlie thought that was awful, but the doctor explained that benign meant not harmful. The doctor wanted to remove it so it would not get worse.

Shortly afterwards, a nurse came to take Charlie to another room. She had him put on a gown and get into a bed. He was ready to go into the surgery room. Another nurse came over to take his temperature, blood pressure, and heart beat. Next, she told him that she would put the I.V. in his hand. "Oh, no!" he thought. Just a few days before, Jeremy told him that the I.V. had a huge needle that was very sharp, and it would really hurt. The next thing Charlie knew, the I.V. was in his hand. It had only felt like a little prick--kind of like a bee sting.

Now his eyes were getting heavy. He remembered the nurse saying he would get sleepy very soon. Before too long he was in a deep sleep.

The light above his head was very bright as he opened his eyes. There stood his mom, Jeremy and his dad, who had come while

Charlie was in surgery. Charlie looked down at his wrist. On his wrist was a gauze bandage, wrapped snugly, and a brace.

The doctor came by and said that everything went very well. Charlie could go home, but he had to be careful for a few days. In a couple of days he wanted Charlie to come to his office. Then the brace could come off, and the doctor would change the bandage.

As Charlie was riding home, he thought, "That wasn't so awful. It really did not hurt as much as Jeremy had said. Hey, how would Jeremy know? He had never had surgery before."

Questions

1. Where did Charlie's mom take him?
2. Who went with Charlie and his mom?
3. Why do you think Jeremy teased Charlie while they were waiting?
* 4. Have you every teased anyone like that? How did that person feel?
5. Why was Charlie having surgery?
* 6. Why did the nurses give Charlie so much attention?
7. What does the word *benign* mean?
* 8. If you were going to have surgery like Charlie did, how would you feel?
* 9. Before the operation, how did Charlie feel about having surgery?
* 10. What do you think Charlie will tell his friends about surgery?

* Recommended for discussion

Sammy

Elizabeth Ballard
Lillian Emery Elementary

My name is Sammy. I'm eleven years old. I live with my father, mother, and three sisters. My family is really good to me, especially when I don't feel so good. I have rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatoid arthritis is a disease which causes pain and swelling where the bones bend and connect. These bends and connections are called joints. Most of my joints have arthritis in them. The kind of arthritis that I have is not often found in kids. That makes me feel pretty special. I didn't always feel this way.

I'll bet you're wondering what arthritis feels like. Well, remember when you had the awful pain of a toothache ? Now, imagine that pain in your joints. The good thing is that the pain isn't always bad, and I don't hurt every day. I've had arthritis since I was four years old. I don't remember too much, only that my feet and ankles have always hurt something awful.

I've found out that there are some things that I can't do very well without feeling pain. The doctors told me that exercise was good for me. So, I ride my skateboard and bike, swim, and take karate. That's right, KARATE! I have a black belt in it! The doctors are amazed that I can do all of this. I am not going to let pain stop me from having fun. I can't do a lot of running. My joints hurt because they hit together when I run a lot. I'm all right as long as I don't overdo it. I feel better when I'm moving around.

When persons have a disease or sickness, I figure they should know all about it. How else are they going to fight it? The doctors gave my mom some great books to read. Now that I'm older, I have read them and others, too. I also read newspapers and magazines to find out about new medicines, ideas, or exercises that might help me.

The reason I'm telling you all this is so you will understand and not be afraid like I was. When I was younger and didn't understand

about my arthritis, I didn't want anyone to know that I had it. Boy, that was dumb, but I didn't know any better. I decided to tell my mom how I felt. After we talked, we went to the library. We looked at a film about a little girl who had arthritis. She was a lot sicker than I am, but she never complained or was sad. She talked about her disease and a lot of the things I had been thinking about. If she could handle being sick, I could, too.

The kind of arthritis I have could cripple me. That means my hands couldn't write very well, or my feet and ankles would hurt when I would walk. There is a good chance that my arthritis may get better as I get older. I'll just have to wait and see.

I have joined a club for kids who are sick like me. We talk about our feelings, medicines, and school. We also plan trips and things we can do together. It's good for kids to get together to plan and talk. We call this our support group. We learn more about our illness and ourselves. It's really nice when we can help each other by talking and knowing that we are not alone in how we feel.

I don't like having pain and stiffness when I try to do things, but I refuse to feel sorry for myself. Sometimes I feel like the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz* . Remember how he needed to be oiled so he would be able to move? Well, I don't need to be oiled, but I do need a hot bath or shower to help me move more easily. The medicine makes it easier, too, but I like to be able to do a lot for myself. I don't want to depend on medicine. My mom is always looking for things that will help me. Once she got this neat mattress cover that is heated. It makes my body feel warm, and I don't have as much pain when I'm sleeping on it.

I didn't want to write too much, but I thought you might like to know a little about rheumatoid arthritis and me. I'm so glad I finally shared my feelings with someone. Think of what I would have missed if I hadn't. I have found some really good friends!

Questions

1. What is Sammy like?

2. What is meant by *rheumatoid arthritis* ?

* 3. How would you describe Sammy's feelings about being sick?

* 4. If you could talk to Sammy, what questions would you ask him?

* 5. What do you think caused Sammy to be ashamed to let anyone know about his illness?

* 6. Why was Sammy happy about joining a club or support group for arthritic kids?

7. What would happen if Sammy did not exercise and take his medicine?

8. What would Sammy have missed if he had not told his mom how he felt?

* 9. How would you feel if you had arthritis?

* 10. How will you treat people with arthritis now that you've read Sammy's story?

* Recommended for discussion

Bill Bug the Big Lug

Mildred Brainard
Meece Middle School

Bill was an overweight, clumsy boy about twelve-years-old and ready to enter middle school. His favorite activity was watching television while having a snack of chips and soda. Each evening this is what he did while waiting for his big brother, Ned, to return from soccer practice. Then Ned usually was too busy with his friends to talk to him.

Bill was really scared to think about the new school year which was almost there, and he needed to talk to someone. Well, anyway, he could dream of being one of the guys. Bill was really eager to see all his friends, especially Jack and Joe. He heard middle school had a different teacher for each class. That would be really neat since last year he had grumpy, old Mr. Brown for three classes.

"If only I could get out of taking physical education, I would be one happy, young dude," Bill thought. "I could really get into action in science and band. Didn't I win the Science Fair last year?"

The first day of school finally arrived. Bill found himself in home room with Joe and Jack, his very best friends. They had all their classes together. This was to be a great year after all.

Mr. Burley, the physical education teacher, was really a friendly man, but he expected the students to participate in exercises and run laps around the field. Joe and Jack came in looking great with high scores on skills and laps, but pokey Bill was one of the last. He was so embarrassed. That meant he wouldn't be on the team with Joe and Jack. He was on a team with boys who couldn't outrun a turtle. After a lap he huffed and puffed and wished for a candy bar. He could go for one right now . . . yum . . . yum. That was about the only thing he could think of now.

As he was running, or waddling along, he suddenly heard one of the boys yell, "Come on, Fatty. Get the lead out. Let's go!" He didn't look up, but tried to move a little faster only to stumble over the

unseen rock. He sprawled on the ground while everyone except his friends laughed and called out, " Bill Bug, the Big Lug!" That did it! He wasn't taking physical education any more.

After that, his attendance record verified the fact that he was often absent on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon.

It was several weeks before his parents became aware of the real reason Bill was sick at his stomach so often after lunch. After a trip to the doctor and a clean bill of health, Bill felt trapped and desperate. He couldn't be humiliated and look like a failure every day in front of his class.

Finally Bill shared with Ned, who was the captain of the soccer team, the terrible experience he had endured in physical education class. "I've never been so embarrassed. There I was lying on the ground looking up at jeering faces and loud laughing." Ned felt sorry for Bill, but he knew Bill needed to change some things in his life. Bill had gained a lot of weight last year.

"Tell you what," Ned said. "I'll help you get in shape, but you must want to help yourself." Bill rocked with excitement.

Ned outlined a program for Bill. It included running and exercises to be done after school while waiting for Ned to get in from soccer practice. Bill thought, "I can handle that."

Ned looked at Bill and said, "NO MORE SNACKS after school or before bedtime."

"Oh, no!" yelled Bill, "I'll starve to death and have no fun at all."

"You won't starve! You must begin to eat right--meat, vegetables, and fruit instead of twinkies, candy, chips, and soda," Ned said.

"It sounds hard, but I'm desperate," replied Bill.

"OK! Today we start a new life for you. It's up to you to stick to the new routine in eating and exercise. No one can make you do it," stressed Ned.

Bill already felt better about himself. He weighed in and wrote down his weight on a piece of paper and hid it in his dresser drawer under his underwear. No way would he let Ned know how fat he really was.

The next day after school, Joe and Jack wanted Bill to go with them to the corner soda shop to hang around and watch girls. "Oh, no," thought Bill, "here go all my promises to Ned to change." But he remembered seeing Ned drink orange juice when he was with his

friends. That could work for him, too. They found Rachel and her friends at the soda shop. They all smiled and chatted while ordering drinks. No one seemed to notice Bill was drinking orange juice. Rachel even spoke to Bill about their science lab experiment. She needed help to understand the procedure.

Bill left his friends at the corner and jogged the long way home. He hardly panted at all. Someday he would be lean and mean like his big brother. He'd have girls calling him, too.

Bill thought, "My life is up to me. I will always have choices to make that will be good or bad for me, but I can do it! I will make it!"

Questions

1. What was Bill like at the beginning of the story?

2. What was Bill like at the end of the story?

* 3. How could Ned, Joe, and Jack help Bill with his problem?

* 4. How could you help an overweight friend?

5. What do you think will happen to Bill as a result of exercising and eating better?

* 6. Have you ever been embarrassed in front of your class? What happened?

* 7. How will Bill feel about himself as he loses weight? How will Ned feel about him?

8. How do you think Bill got his problem?

* 9. Is weight a problem for you? Why or why not?

* 10. What could happen to Bill if he did nothing about his problem?

* Recommended for discussion

This is Living

Pat Hommel
George Rogers Clark School

I remember one day in the fall when Jimmy and I were in the fifth grade, a new kid entered our class. At recess we were was leaning against the school building watching the girls try to play basketball. We had to let them have the basketball area two days a week, now. They were squealing and giggling and looking over at us to see if we were mad. If we acted like we didn't care, they'd get tired and quit.

The new kid started talking to Jimmy and me, "What's wrong with that kid?"

"Where?" I asked.

"Over there playing dodgeball. He's got no hair. There!"

"You mean Hans? There's nothing wrong with Hans. He's a good guy. Hey, Hans, Come here."

I watched as Hans shuffled over. I'd known Hans for a long time because his mom and my mom were best friends. But it was like I was seeing Hans for the first time. He had light blue eyes and a big, wide grin. Even though I was still mad about the girls using our court, I had to grin. A few tufts of very fine, fair hair poked from his almost bald scalp. The skin on his hands and face was rough and pebble-like. He must look like a creature from another planet to this new kid.

"Hey, Jimmy." Hans greeted the tall, tough fifth-grader with a friendly shove on the shoulder. Nobody else on the whole playground would have dared to shove Jimmy, not even in play. He was about the toughest guy in the whole school. Jimmy didn't take anything. Everybody knew not to mess around with him.

"Watch yourself, Hans. I may have to beat you up." Both boys cracked up laughing. Jimmy was always looking out for Hans. Jimmy didn't let anybody hassle Hans. Their friendship dated back to first grade. Sister Jean Ann always let Hans lead the first-grade lunch line, and since they went in pairs, Hans got to choose a partner. He

almost always chose Jimmy. The school principal would see the first grade coming into the cafeteria and she'd always greet them with, "Here comes King Hans."

I guess all the teachers gave Hans special privileges. Everybody in the whole school, except this new guy, knew that Hans was going to die. I mean he was supposed to die in the first grade.

Father Marchino even let Hans go on the "servers' picnic" before any of the rest of our class got to go. We had to wait until we got to be "altar boys" in the fifth grade. I guess he thought Hans wouldn't live long enough to become an "altar boy"--but Hans fooled him!

Sometimes I'd envy all the attention and privileges Hans had around school.

When Hans was really sick, he would go to Kosair Children's Hospital. We'd pray for him at mass, and people who had seen him would tell us how he was doing. Then Hans would come back to school and brag about all the really neat things they had at the hospital. He said they had special toys, people came to read to you, and everybody was nice to everybody. Hans said it was like being on vacation. He said they even had a McDonald's. I can't believe that part about a McDonald's, but I guess it's true. If you are going to die, I don't think you'd lie.

The only time Hans ever talked about his illness was when he'd tell the teacher, " I don't have my homework because I didn't feel good last night."

The teacher would say, "Oh," and that would be it.

That was another one of those times when I'd think, "It's pretty nice to have an excuse all through school for not doing homework."

Most of time we forgot about Hans' illness. He was just a little slower getting around, and some days he wouldn't be as lively as others. But most of the time he acted just like the rest of us, and he sure tried to keep up with us. Then, of course, if he couldn't do something he had Jimmy to help him or to rescue him.

Hans had a favorite expression whenever he was tired and Jimmy was carrying him upstairs at school. He'd give you a "high-five" and say, "This is living," and grin like he was putting something over on Jimmy.

Hans certainly wasn't a saint. He never did anything mean that would hurt somebody, but he was what my mom called "mischievous." He'd do a lot of things to give us a laugh. He could get by with stuff we couldn't. Whenever our class wanted to do something special we'd say, "You ask her, Hans."

Hans enjoyed doing that, especially if he got the teacher to give us an extra recess on a hot day or stay longer on the playground at noon. He'd strut around and remind us in a joking way.

Our eighth grade trip to Washington would not have been near as much fun without Hans. Jimmy and I took turns carrying him piggyback when he'd give out on the educational tours. "I've seen all I can handle," Hans said and shuffled over to a chair.

"No, you don't," Jimmy said. "If I gotta look at these phones, mummies, slides, railroads, and silent movies, so do you. You just want to get back to the hotel and have all the fun with pillow fights. Lucky thing for you I caught that lamp last night. If it had fallen, I'd probably have to take the rap for it." Both boys chuckled. In addition to helping Hans, Jimmy was willing to take the blame for him. Incredible!

Coming home from Washington, Hans got that sly grin on his face about the same time that Ms. Sadler, our eighth-grade teacher, got a puzzled frown on her face. She started down the aisle of our bus sniffing. Then it hit. We all smelled this awful stink. Ms. Sadler sniffed it out. Someone had stuck limburger cheese on the radiator, and the bus was reeking. Jimmy turned and playfully beat up Hans who was having a laughing fit!

After eight grade our class kind of split up. Some kids went to Providence, and some went to New Albany High. I didn't see all the kids from our class again until I went to Hans' funeral.

I remember one day, out of the clear blue, Hans looked at me and said, "When I die, will you come to my funeral?"

I didn't know what to say right away. Then I said, "Sure."

It was nice to see all the old gang, but, naturally, I was feeling really sad and wishing I had seen more of Hans these past two years. I was wondering if he had needed anything or if I could have helped him. Then I looked around at all the people in the church, and I realized Hans had kept on making friends right up to the day he died. I guess people just like to be around a happy guy like Hans.

At his funeral Father Marchino didn't act sad at all. He reminded us about how Hans was always cheerful and game. I don't remember exactly all he said, but it was about how Hans showed us how to live and that we should be happy that we had known him. I don't know about that, but I do know that I liked Hans a lot. I'll miss him almost as much as Jimmy will. Somehow, Jimmy doesn't seem as tough since Hans died.

Questions

* 1. Have you ever been ill enough to be confined to a hospital?

2. Why were you treated "special"?

3. How did Hans feel about the hospital?

* 4. Have you ever wanted to be someone else? Explain.

* 5. What did you like about Hans?

* 6. Why do you think the teachers didn't make Hans do his homework?

* 7. Why was Hans able to stay so happy?

8. What did Hans say that let you know he was aware that he was seriously ill?

* 9. If you wrote a note to Jimmy telling him something you admired about him, what would you say?

* 10. What do you think Hans would have wished Father Marchino to say at his funeral?

* Recommended for discussion

THE TRUTH

Tom Smith
North Harrison Elementary

Jimmy was back home and was trying to avoid his mom. He had just returned from a weekend visit with his dad. Jimmy's mother and father had divorced two years ago, and his dad had married a woman named Doris. Jimmy couldn't understand why the divorce had happened or why his parents didn't love each other anymore. As a matter of fact, they didn't even like each other. Sometimes he wondered if anything he had done had helped cause the divorce.

Jimmy was avoiding his mom because she often asked him about his visits with Dad. She always wanted to know what they did, how much fun they had, and about Doris. He knew that if he told Mom he had a good time or said anything nice about Doris that his mother always looked hurt. She would try to hide it, but he could tell. It was easier not to talk about his weekend than to run the risk of saying something that would hurt her.

Jimmy used to daydream about ways he could get his parents back together so they could all live in one house. He had pretty much given up that idea. He could tell that Dad liked Doris, and his mom said a lot of things about Dad that let Jimmy know she didn't want anything to do with Dad anymore. It sometimes made him angry because his dad talked so much nicer to Doris than he did to his mom. Jimmy didn't understand that either. Sometimes he caught himself liking Doris a little, but he would always quickly think of some reason not to like her. He thought it would be unfair to Mom to like someone who caused her so much hurt.

Tonight Mom hadn't asked Jimmy about his weekend. Maybe she could tell he didn't want to talk about it. She simply said, "Want some fresh cookies?" It didn't take Jimmy long to answer that question.

As he ate his fourth cookie while Mom was busy washing dishes, he thought, "It really is strange. Whenever I go to Dad's, they always have something special for me, and Mom is always especially nice to me when I get home. I wonder if they think I will love one of them more than the other?"

But, then, Jimmy figured adults were too smart to believe anything silly like that. Kids are supposed to love both their parents, and Jimmy truly did. Of course, moms and dads were supposed to love each other, and his didn't. Maybe they were afraid that because they didn't love each other, he would stop loving them, too. Maybe this was why they always tried to be so nice to him when he first got to each of their houses.

On the fifth cookie, Jimmy wasn't so concerned about his parents' feelings. As a matter of fact, he found himself a little angry at both of them. Their not loving each other any more and not living together was sometimes a real pain. When his friends from school would have a party on the weekend, he would often have to miss it to go across town to spend time with Dad and Doris. Once, he even missed a rock concert when a friend had a back stage pass for him. When he had gotten to Dad's, he had to stay alone because Doris had a party at work that she and Dad had to go to. He hadn't had any trouble finding a reason not to like Doris that weekend.

There were things at school that made him angry, too. Sometimes, when a teacher would suggest that his dad help him with a project at home, Jimmy would be embarrassed. Usually teachers understood after a while and wouldn't bring up situations like that. But every new school year, before the teachers knew his situation, he would get caught trying to avoid the truth.

All of a sudden that word TRUTH jumped at him and he began to think. "The TRUTH is that my life isn't like a lot of other kids'. My mom and dad don't do what parents are supposed to do--live together and get along."

"The TRUTH is that my parents do try to go out of their way to make up for the inconvenience they've caused me by divorcing. The TRUTH is that I often have to be the man around the house for Mom because Dad isn't here."

"The TRUTH is that I can't do anything about it. They decided to divorce and didn't even ask me what I thought about it. They just told me what they had decided."

He had eaten too many cookies, and Mom had let him. He had satisfied more than his taste for sweets, however. He had faced the TRUTH about his parents' divorce and the fact that his life wasn't going to be like it was before.

Jimmy decided that his parents were going to have to face the TRUTH about him, too. He wasn't going to worry all the time about telling them just the things they wanted to hear. It shouldn't be his responsibility to defend Mom or Dad to the other. It was also okay to like Doris a little. She could never replace Mom, but she could be a friend. And if Mom asked if her cookies were better than Doris' brownies, he would tell her that he liked them both, which was the TRUTH.

The cookies had made Jimmy's belly feel much better, and the TRUTH had made his heart feel better, too.

Questions

1. Why was Jimmy trying to avoid his mom?

* 2. How do you think Jimmy felt about his parents' divorce?

* 3. Besides Jimmy, who else in this story do you think may be hurting or angry?

4. What might Jimmy do to avoid embarrassment at the beginning of each school year?

* 5. Why do you think Jimmy hadn't discovered the TRUTH about his situation before now?

* 6. What made Jimmy's heart feel better at the end of the story?

* 7. How do you feel about Doris?

* 8. What do you think Jimmy means by "being the man around the house"?

* 9. What other kinds of things might cause a lot of change in a person's life?

* 10. Why won't Jimmy have to "avoid" Mom and Dad anymore?

*Recommended for discussion

Real Men Don't Whine

M. E. Miller
North Harrison Elementary

"Mary Elizabeth, you may have to put some iodine on my head after a while," Jerol mentioned as he watched the ball game on the television.

"Why? What's wrong with your head?" Mary Elizabeth's interest was aroused.

"I bumped it this afternoon at work."

"Let me see," she said as she began to root around in his hair. "Oh! My goodness! You need more than just a little iodine. You need some stitches in there. You head is split open."

"It's not that bad." Jerol always pretended that his injuries were nothing. He never wanted to go to the doctor. "Besides," he continued, "it's already 9:15. The doctor's office is closed. The emergency room will be full and busy. It will take too long. Everyone will think I'm a sissy because you can't even see the cut."

"That's silly," Mary Elizabeth encouraged. "The cut is in your hair. That's a really dirty area. When you wash your hair, the cut will pop back open. Everytime you comb your hair, it will hurt. There will be lots of germs. The cut might become infected. It needs stitches so that it can heal faster. No one will think you're a sissy. You can tell them that I made you come to the emergency room!"

Fifteen minutes later, Jerol and Mary Elizabeth were at the hospital emergency room. Jerol had to answer several questions while the hospital worker typed the answers into her computer. He had to tell her his full name, where he lived, and his phone number. Then she asked questions about insurance and his medical history. Finally, Jerol was ready to go into the emergency room.

It was an exciting place. Nurses and doctors were very busy. A mom and dad were there with their little girl. A policeman was speaking on the telephone. A woman, who was going to have a baby, was talking to a nurse. A teenager was lying on a bed. He had a cast

on his arm. Many people were there to see the doctor. Their families were sitting or standing around waiting.

Since Jerol wasn't badly injured, a nurse told him to sit on a chair and roll up his sleeve. After writing down his temperature and blood pressure, the nurse took him to an examining room. Mary Elizabeth went along.

"What's wrong with you?" Nurse Davis seemed surprised to see such a healthy looking man. "You don't look so bad."

"I cut my head," Jerol began to explain. "I was delivering some food to a restaurant, and as I bent over to put the food on the floor of the cooler, I hit my head on a metal bar."

"Did it knock you out?" she questioned.

"Not totally. My knees buckled, and I just sorta fell backward, sitting in a tub of hamburger! I was really woozy, and even though it was in plastic bags, I remember the cold, squishy feeling of sitting in that tub of raw hamburger.

"Let me take a look. Lie down." Nurse Davis began to gently part Jerol's hair looking for the injury. At first she didn't see it, and Jerol was afraid that she was going to scold him for wasting the doctor's time. But then she saw it. "Well, I guess you did bump your head! That's a pretty deep cut. You certainly do need stitches. I'll have to scrub it first so that it won't get infected."

Nurse Davis readied a tray for the doctor. She used tongs to place several hot sterile towels on the tray. Then she collected the instruments and supplies needed to sew up Jerol's head. Mary Elizabeth was really interested, and the nurse let her stand right beside Jerol's head to see everything that was going on.

First, the nurse shaved a little space all around the cut so that the hair wouldn't be in the way. Jerol worried that it would look bad until the hair grew back. Then she poured some special brown soap onto some gauze and began to scrub Jerol's head. And I mean scrub! She really washed that cut. It sorta hurt Jerol. He squinched his eyes shut, but he didn't say anything. After she scrubbed the cut, she squirted off the soap with a bottle of saline solution. Then all was ready for the doctor.

Doctor Adams was nice. He asked more questions about how Jerol had cut his head.

"I hit him in the head with a ball bat," Mary Elizabeth joked.

"Well," the doctor laughed, "I'll have to start sewing."

"Can I watch?" asked Mary Elizabeth. "I'm really interested in this stuff."

"Sure. If you can take it," the doctor replied. "Some watchers faint when they see the actual stitches! Sometimes we catch them before they hit the floor; sometimes we don't!"

After washing his hands, Dr. Adams put on rubber gloves. Then he prepared Jerol by covering his head with a sterile cloth. There was a hole in the cloth, and the cut showed through the hole. Dr. Adams said that this was called a sterile field, and that Mary Elizabeth could watch but not touch anything.

"This will sting a little," Dr. Adams said as he gave Jerol a shot right in the cut! The shot would keep Jerol from feeling the needle as the doctor sewed.

"That didn't hurt as much as when the nurse scrubbed the cut awhile ago!" Jerol laughed. He said that he really didn't feel much at all.

The sewing needle was about one inch long and looked like half of a circle. It was curved so that the doctor could sew more easily. He didn't use his fingers at all! He held the needle with forceps. They looked like scissors, but were more like a pair of pliers.

Dr. Adams took six little stitches. He tied each one. They were not connected. It took about ten minutes. Jerol said that he couldn't feel a thing. Mary Elizabeth stood right beside the doctor and could see every movement he made. It was neat! She could see the needle going in one side of the cut and coming out the other. The doctor's hands were very steady. His fingers were nimble. Tying the knot for each stitch was tricky. The stitches are called sutures. After the last suture, Dr. Adams put some ointment on the cut. The medicine was to fight infection.

"Thanks a lot, Doctor," Jerol said as he sat up.

"You're welcome, " Dr. Adams answered. "Before you leave, the nurse will tell you how to take care of the stitches. Try not to sit in any more hamburger." The doctor chuckled at his own joke as he walked to his next patient.

Nurse Davis gave Jerol some papers to sign. She explained how to take care of his stitches and gave him some ointment.

"Remember, in one week you should go to your family doctor to have the stitches removed," she finished.

Jerol and Mary Elizabeth were back home by 10:30 p.m. The whole trip had only taken a little over an hour!

Questions

1. Why didn't Jerol want to go to the emergency room?

* 2. Is it all right for adults to be afraid of doctors? Why might they be afraid?

3. How many different kinds of jobs went on in the emergency room?

4. Would you rather watch someone get sewn up or do the sewing?

5. How do you think the nurse felt when she knew that she was hurting Jerol?

6. *Compassionate* is a word that means showing a kindly feeling toward other's pain. Was anyone compassionate in this story? Who? How?

7. Do you know anyone who tries to joke and be brave when he or she is hurt? Describe the person.

8. What might have happened if Jerol hadn't gone for medical help?

* 9. Have you ever been hurt and not told someone?

* 10. Would you be afraid to go to an emergency room if you were hurt? What would frighten you most?

*Recommended for discussion

Ricky's Hospital Experience

Young Ricky Eaton was having the greatest time of his life. It was half-time of the first game of the season, and the score was twelve to six with his team, the Bluejays, in the lead. Coach Brown had just congratulated him for scoring the last touchdown of the half and was now talking to some of the other players.

Ricky could hear his loud, booming voice in the distance, but he wasn't listening to the words. Instead, he was thinking about how he had moved here from Newport four months ago. It had been tough finding new friends and managing to fit in, but he had been accepted by most of the kids in his class, and he gradually became friends with them. Then football season started, and Ricky went out for the team. The coach loved his playing ability, and his popularity began to grow as he proved his abilities in scrimmage games. Ricky was still dreaming of his new-found fame and feeling very proud of himself when the buzzer sounded signaling time for the second half to begin.

On the third play of the second half, Ricky broke away from the defense and ran wide to the left. Brian, the quarterback, threw him a perfect pass, and it looked as though he was going to score another touchdown. Then, as he neared the 20 yard line, he was tackled from behind. Both players went down hard, and Ricky felt a sharp stab of pain in his right leg.

Both benches emptied as the players and coaches scrambled onto the field. Ricky dimly heard Coach Brown yelling for him to lie still instead of trying to get up. At first the pain was almost unbearable, and Ricky only caught bits and pieces of the conversation going on around him. However, he did hear the coach say that his leg may be broken and that an ambulance was on the way.

After a short time, Ricky saw the ambulance come rolling onto the field with sirens screaming and red lights flashing. Two men dressed in blue uniforms got out of the ambulance and rushed toward him. One of the men began asking Ricky where he hurt, and the other man brought out a stretcher and a big metal box that Ricky thought looked an awful lot like his father's tool box. Then the ambulance

men took an inflatable plastic splint from the metal box and placed it on Ricky's leg and proceeded to strap him onto the stretcher. They explained to Ricky that these precautions were necessary to keep his leg from bouncing around during his trip to the hospital and causing him more pain.

The ambulance took Ricky straight to the emergency room of the hospital, and the men rolled his stretcher through the automatic doors and into the emergency room. Two nurses dressed in white uniforms took his stretcher and rolled him down a long narrow hall and into a small room where Dr. Henderson was waiting for him. The doctor took the plastic splint from Ricky's leg and examined the leg carefully. He said that he didn't think the leg was broken, but the leg would have to be x-rayed to be sure. Then Dr. Henderson gave Ricky a shot for the pain and sent the two nurses to take Ricky down to the x-ray lab.

As the nurses wheeled Ricky down the long hallway toward the lab, Ricky noticed the coke machines, elevators, and waiting rooms. He saw nurses going into and out of various rooms. They were carrying medicine or pushing wheel chairs, and he noticed that every room had adjustable beds and televisions.

The x-ray technician placed Ricky on a table and explained to him that he was going to take several pictures of his leg. These pictures were called x-rays. The doctor could then look at these pictures and determine whether Ricky's leg was broken or not.

As it turned out, Ricky's leg was not broken at all. However, it was sprained badly, and Ricky had to spend the night in the hospital for observation. He was given a room with one of those adjustable beds and a remote control television set. The nurses came in regularly and bandaged his leg on an ice pack to keep the swelling down. Early the next morning a nurse brought in a big pot of flowers that his classmates had sent him. Then, the doctor came in and told Ricky that he could go home now, but he would have to miss football practice for a couple of weeks until his leg healed.

"Boy," Ricky thought, "I can't wait to get back to school and tell my friends about my experience at the hospital."

Questions

1. What emergency equipment was used on Ricky's leg before the trip to the hospital?

2. During what part of the game did Ricky have the accident?

3. Why do you think that Ricky felt so happy at the beginning of the story?

4. At the end of the story, how did Ricky feel about his experience at the hospital?

5. What was the first thing the doctor said after examining Ricky's leg?

6. What did the doctor suggest next?

7. How might this injury affect Ricky's family?

8. Why did Ricky have to spend the night in the hospital?

* 9. From your reading of the story, how do you think a bad sprain should be treated?

* 10. What evidence did the doctor use to determine that Ricky's leg was definitely not broken?

*Recommended for discussion

Just Another Kid

Patricia A. Cox
Irvine Elementary

Today is the most important day of my life. It is the first day of school, and I can't wait. Mom says I'll learn all sorts of things and make new friends. I hope I make a lot of new friends, because I live way out in the country, and there isn't anyone for me to play with except for my baby brother, Kyle.

I got up real early and was dressed and waiting for Mom. She said we had plenty of time since school didn't open till 8:00. Mom fixed my breakfast, lunch, and all my snacks. She labeled each so my teacher would know when and which one to give me. Then I had to take my shot. I really don't like to take it; it hurts sometimes. But I know I have to take it every day. Sometimes I get to hold the needle. When I'm seven I get to go to camp and learn how to do it all by myself.

Mom is finally ready. Women! They are so slow. I've heard my dad say that, and I agree with him today. I've got my new jeans and shoes on and, of course, my favorite shirt. I didn't forget my crayons either! Finally, we are off!

School! It looks so big. Maybe I should go home and wait another year. I'm going to stay in the car. OH, NO! It's too late--the principal has seen me, and here she comes! She keeps telling me how glad she is to see me, and she knows that we won't have any problems. Mom looks worried but smiles and kisses me goodbye. "Everything will be just fine," the principal tells Mom as she leads me into the building.

The principal is asking me all sorts of questions. "Ryan, have you eaten? Do you feel all right? Do you need to eat?" She sounds just like my granny. I assured her I was fine, but she still had this worried look like Mom did as she drove off. The principal didn't let me go with the other kids. She took me to my teacher.

My teacher stood in the door clasping her hands with the same worried look. Really! It was a look as if someone had just told her that she had eaten worms for breakfast!

I was beginning to think something wasn't right. ""There's something I don't know about--something Mom hasn't told me!"

TERRIFIC! Here come the other kids. I just knew I'd make some new friends. We all sat down in the floor around the teacher's chair. She was going to tell us some important stuff.

She told us the rules, what we needed to bring to school, when lunch was, what we would be doing, and where the bathroom was. Then she told the kids I was different and would be allowed to eat in the room and go to the restroom whenever I needed to.

I looked around the room. I was dressed like everyone. I looked like everyone else. What did she mean by "I was different"? I'll have to keep a watch on everyone and see what she meant.

The principal kept coming by to check on me. The teacher kept trying to feed me. She wouldn't let me play at recess or in gym. She just kept saying I was *different* and shouldn't do those things. Mom never said things like that. The kids wouldn't play with me because I just had to sit. Besides, they didn't want to play with someone that was different. I had a rotten day.

Mom met me at the back door with a hug and kiss. She fixed me a glass of milk and a peanut butter sandwich. As I ate, she asked how school was.

Calmly I said, "Fine."

"What did you do?" she asked.

"NOTHING!" I *said* sternly.

"Nothing! Surely you did something. Did you play outside?" Mom asked, becoming a little annoyed.

"NO," was my answer.

Mom then asked if I had learned anything new. "Yes," I said under my breath. Smiling, Mom asked what I had learned. Looking toward the window, I slowly replied, "I'm different!"

Mom stopped. She sat there repeating the word "different." Then she finally asked the big question, "Who told you that you are different?" I told all about my day and what the teacher had said and how the principal had acted.

Mom then explained to me that some people didn't understand diabetics. They often act silly instead of treating us like normal people and just letting us be kids. She assured me tomorrow would be better.

Mom went to school the next day. She talked to my teacher and the principal. I couldn't hear them. But I guess it went all right

because Mom gave me an all-knowing smile as she left. The teacher still had that worried look, but I got to play just like everyone else. I made new friends, and no one said I was different.

Mom says, "Ryan, life may be harder for you because people don't always accept others that they think are different. You may have to prove myself."

School may turn out to be all right. I just wish my teacher didn't always look so worried. Mom says not to worry about it, that it is her problem, not mine. She'll get over it sooner or later.

Questions

1. Who is telling the story?

* 2. What is Ryan's medical problem? What is it like?

* 3. In what ways is Ryan like you and your friends?

* 4. In what ways is Ryan different from you and others you know?

* 5. How was your first day of school like Ryan's?

* 6. What could have made the teacher, principal, and students act differently?

* 7. How would you feel if no one would talk or play sports with you?

8. Ryan looked forward to school. Tell about an event you looked forward to but were disappointed in. Why?

* 9. What did Mom mean by her advice in the last paragraph of the story?

* 10. What is the real meaning of this story to you?

* Recommended for discussion

A Boy Named Mark

Rebecca J. Caudill
Indiana University Southeast

Hi! My name is Mark, and I am nine years old. I have four brothers, four sisters, and a swell dad and mom. I might also mention that I have leukemia. If you don't know what that is, don't feel bad. I didn't know what it was, either, when I first heard about it. Leukemia is a blood disease that the doctors don't have a cure for yet. That means that I may die sooner than some of my friends, unless someone finds a cure soon.

When I first found out that I had leukemia, I was scared to death. I just kept thinking that I might die right then, or while I was playing, or maybe while I was asleep. I've had it for over a year now. I still get scared sometimes when I think about dying, but it's not as bad as it was at first. Now I just try to do as much as I can on the days that I feel good and get a lot of rest on the days that I don't feel so good.

You're probably wondering why I'm telling you all of this. Well, the reason I am is so you'll understand me a little better and understand how people with leukemia really feel.

First of all, I know that I look a little different. Sometimes my hair falls out and my face swells up, but I wish people could realize that I can't help how I look. My medicine and my treatments make these things happen, and without them, I would die. Everywhere I go, people just stare at me. Sometimes it makes me feel so ugly that I almost cry. My dad, mom, brothers, and sisters seem to be the only ones who don't stare at me. Oh, and the doctors and nurses, too. They're real nice to me, and they make me laugh.

I go to the hospital three times a week for my treatments. Everyone on the staff there is really neat, especially Nurse Maggie. She's my favorite nurse in the whole world. She makes me feel special. My treatments are no fun, but I have to have them so I can keep having lots of good days instead of bad ones. Some weeks I don't have to go to the hospital at all. I like those weeks the best.

When I really get sick and my blood count is real high, I have to go to the hospital and stay until it gets back to normal. My mom stays with me during the day, but at bedtime she stays at the Ronald McDonald House. It gets kind of lonely and scary here sometimes because I meet a lot of other kids who have leukemia, and sometimes they die. That's real scary! I try not to let Mom know when I'm scared or sad because I don't want her and Dad to worry about me.

Dad has to work during the week. Since it takes several hours to drive to the hospital from our house, he only gets to come see us on the weekends. I wish I could go to a hospital that is closer to home, but this is supposed to be one of the best ones for leukemia patients. I sure miss seeing Dad and everybody during the week. I bet they miss me, too.

During my last long stay at the hospital, I got to go stay some with Mom some over at the Ronald McDonald House. At first it was fun because there was a lot to do there, but I would rather have gone home. I wish I could stay home and be with my family and friends, but I know I can't get well that way. Maybe, someday, the doctors will find a cure for leukemia, and then I'll never need to stay in the hospital again. Boy, that would be great!

Well, I've told you a little about myself and how I feel sometimes. I hope you understand better how someone with leukemia feels and what we go through. I'm just like everyone else in most ways. I feel sad, scared, lonely, and bored sometimes, but I also feel happy, hopeful, excited, and cheerful sometimes, just like you do. I know I have a disease called leukemia which might be something you don't have, but I am still a person with feelings and wants and needs just like you. So, the next time you see someone that looks like I do right now with no hair and a swollen face, don't just stare, SMILE. I bet it will make both of you feel so much better!

Questions

1. What kind of problems does Mark have?
2. What is leukemia?
3. How do Mark's treatments affect him?
* 4. How is Mark different from you?
* 5. How is Mark like you?
* 6. If you could speak to Mark, what questions would you like to ask him?
7. How do the people at the hospital help Mark?
* 8. What could happen to Mark if he didn't go to the hospital for his treatments?
* 9. How would you feel if you found out that you had leukemia?
* 10. How will you treat people with leukemia now that you have read this story about Mark?

* Recommended for discussion

Summer Olympics

Sam McGill
Indiana University Southeast

On your mark! Get set! Go! With those words, six legs and three bodies went churning down the trail. It was Jimmy who had given the count-down. He was the captain of this three-man bobsled team. Joe was directly across from Jimmy, and Chip was in the middle and directly behind them. All three boys were pushing and running as fast as they could to give their homemade bobsled with wheels a fast start.

Several months had passed since the Winter Olympics, but the boys had talked often about what a blast it would be to go bobsledding. After creating their own bobsled, they had practiced the running start on small hills and had that down perfect. First, Jimmy would jump on, then Joe, and last of all Chip, except for a couple of times when Chip fell flat on his face and didn't get to make the trip.

This time each boy jumped on at just the right time, and they were cruising. The boys felt they had graduated from the small hills, so today they took on a big one. The hill was on Joe's farm. It was long and steep and covered with small brush, rocks, and a few large pine trees. The trail the bobsled would follow was a cattle trail. It was narrow, fairly rough, and had a couple of curves.

About a third of the way down, the sled had picked up quite a bit of speed, but Jimmy was steering like a pro. As they came around the curve at the halfway point, the boys became afraid. This ride had become scary. The bushes and the rocks were whizzing by, and the boys knew they had lost control. Coming out of the turn, the sled got on two wheels, then flipped over, and spilled the boys into the bushes.

Chip was up first with a startled look on his face. Then Joe sat up and said, "Far out!" Jimmy didn't move at first, and when he did, he moaned with pain. "My arm," he said, "I think it's broken."

Chip and Joe helped Jimmy back to his house. Jimmy's mom put them all in the car, and away to the emergency room at the local hospital they went. Chip and Joe waited in the vistors' lounge for what seemed a long time. Finally Jimmy came out. His arm was in a cast and sling, and he had two suckers in the other hand. A doctor in a white coat was with Jimmy and his mom.

"These are my friends that I told you about, Doctor," said Jimmy.

"Well, I'm very pleased to meet you," the doctor said as he shook hands with Chip and Joe. "Jimmy told me how he got hurt, and I just wanted to let you know that you were very lucky that you were not all injured more seriously. I made Jimmy promise that from now on, before he tries bobsledding the big hills, he will have his dad check them out first. Will you promise that too?"

"Yes, sir," said Chip and Joe at the same time.

"Good," said the doctor, "and here is your medicine. I'll expect you to take it." With a worried look, Chip and Joe held out their hands. The doctor produced four more suckers, two for each boy.

Questions

1. What inspired the boys to build the bobsled?
2. What do you think the bobsled needed but didn't have?
3. What mistakes do you think the boys made?
* 4. Have you ever been inspired to do something because of what you saw on T.V.? Tell about it.
5. How would you have avoided the problems that the boys had?
* 6. How do you think Chip and Joe would have felt if Jimmy had been paralyzed or killed in the accident?
* 7. How would their parents have felt if the boys had been more seriously injured?
8. Have you ever been injured when playing with friends? How could you have avoided the injury?
* 9. What was the most humorous part of the story? Why?
10. After the sled started down the hill, was there anything the boys could have done to avoid the accident? What?

* Recommended for discussion